

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of August 21, 2008 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the 3-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due. However, the Examiner is expressly authorized to charge any deficiencies to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

Claims Objections

Claims 1-2 and 4-6 were objected to due to informalities. More specifically, it was asserted that Claim 1 sets forth a limitation of "receiving at the device", where it is not clear whether "the device" is referring to "a device serving as a bridge" or one of "a plurality of instant messaging devices participating in an instant messaging based conference."

Appropriate correction has been made.

Claims Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 1-2 and 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Published Patent Application 2004/0003041 to Moore, *et al.* (hereinafter Moore) in view of U.S. Patent 7,058,036 to Yu, *et al.* (hereinafter Yu).

Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejections and thus have not amended the claims.

Aspects of Applicants' Invention

It may be helpful to reiterate certain aspects of Applicants' invention prior to addressing the cited references. One embodiment of the invention, as typified by amended Claim 1, is a method for bridging a teleconferencing system and an instant messaging system.

The method can include providing a speech processing device serving as a bridge between the teleconferencing system and the messaging system. The speech processing device can be directly coupled between the teleconferencing system and the instant messaging system or coupled between the teleconferencing system and the instant messaging system via a data network. The speech processing device can be configured to convert a speech input into a text message or a text message into a speech output.

The method also can include receiving at the speech processing device a speech input received by the teleconferencing system from a telephone connected to the teleconferencing system; transcribing the speech input to a first text message by the speech processing device; and transmitting the first text message to a plurality of instant messaging devices participating in an instant messaging based conference managed by the instant messaging system.

The method further can include receiving at the speech processing device a second text message from any one among the plurality of instant messaging devices participating in the instant messaging based conference; converting the second text message to a speech output; and transmitting the speech output to a plurality of telephones participating in a teleconference managed by the teleconferencing system.

See, e.g., Specification, paragraphs [0013]-[0018]; see also Figs. 1 and 2.

The Claims Define Over The Prior Art

FIG. 1 of Moore illustrates a communication system that provides chat-based services. The communication system 10 includes a data processing system 12 coupled by a communications network 20 to a service provider system 30 that provides chat-based services. The data processing system 12 may comprise any of a desktop personal computer system, laptop or handheld computer system, personal digital assistant (PDA), mobile telephone, television set-top box, or other existing or later known or developed

electronic device that supports the communication with the network 20. The data processing system 12 may execute a chat client 14 as an application. The chat client 14 is a form of instant communications client that supports real-time or substantially real-time instant messaging communication. Using the chat client 14, a user may communicate with one or more other users accessible through the network 20 from an IP telephone 92 or a conventional telephone 62. See paragraphs [0074] and [0075].

As can be clearly seen from the above description, Moore only discloses an instant messaging system which can be accessed by an IP phone or a traditional phone (not connected to any teleconferencing system), not a system that bridging an instant messaging system and a teleconference system according to the present invention. The data processing system 12 (chat client 14), the communications network 20, and the service provider system 30 (providing chat-based services) are all part of the instant messaging system.

The communication system 10 of Moore can also include a gateway system 50 coupled to the network 20 or the service provider system 30. The gateway system 50 logically may include two elements: an intelligent chat gateway 52 that serves as an interface to the service provider system 30 and a voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP) gateway 54 that serves as a telephony network interface to support the completion of calls between the data processing system 12 and the telephone 62. See paragraphs [0092] and [0093].

Clearly, the intelligent chat gateway 52 is not a teleconferencing system in the sense of the present invention. Rather, it only serves as an interface between the instant messaging service provider system 30 and the gateway system 50. It is noted that managing communications among a plurality of instant messaging users is not equivalent to a teleconferencing system.

It is further noted that if the service provider system 30 is considered as a teleconferencing system, then there are no separate instant messaging system and teleconferencing system in the communication system 10 because the service provider system 30 is also an instant messaging service provider system that provides chat-based services. Since there are no separate instant messaging system and teleconferencing system, there is also no need to provide a system to bridge the instant messaging system and the teleconferencing system.

The communication system 10 of Moore can further include an intelligent media translator 70, which may comprise one or both of a text-to-speech module 72 and a speech-to-text module 74 to convert between the text chat employed by the chat client 14 and speech signals from telephones such as the telephone 62. See paragraph [0103].

However, since the intelligent media translator 70 is connected between the VoIP gateway 54 and the chat client 14, both of which are part of the instant messaging system, the intelligent media translator 70 cannot be considered as a device serving as a bridge between a teleconferencing system and a messaging system in the sense of the present invention.

Yu discloses a wireless instant messaging system. A mobile station (MS), such as a cellular telephone, may be registered with an instant messaging (IM) server as being available to receive instant messages via an IM proxy. A user at an IM client terminal may then send an instant message destined for a user at the MS. The IM server may direct the message to a service node (SN), which may convert the message into an industry standard SMS message and send the SMS message to the MS. At the MS, a user may read the SMS message and engage a callback feature, which will establish a dial-up voice connection between the MS and the SN. The user at the MS may then speak an instant message response, and the SN may record the response as a compressed audio file. The SN may then send the compressed audio file as an attachment to an instant

message back to the user at the IM client terminal. The IM client terminal may then play the spoken response message. See the Abstract.

Clearly, Yu discloses a method of IM communication between a cellular phone user and a user of IM system. The cellular phone cannot be compared with a teleconferencing system in the sense of the present invention. Although Yu mentions in col. 21, line 62 to col. 22, line 4 that the invention could equally extend to facilitate communication between three or more parties at once, thereby providing for real-time conferencing, it is noted that Yu does not disclose the concept of bridging an existing IM system and an existing teleconferencing system of the present invention. It is also noted that a conferencing bridge, which maintains a record of the parties to a conference and then multicasts instant messages between the conference participants, is not a teleconferencing system (using traditional telephone system) in the sense of the present invention.

Accordingly, the cited references, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest each and every element of Claim 1. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that Claim 1 defines over the prior art. Furthermore, as each of the remaining claims depends from Claim 1 while reciting additional features, Applicants further respectfully submit that the remaining claims likewise define over the prior art.

Applicants thus respectfully request that the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the

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Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,
AKERMAN SENTERFITT

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